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ABSTRACT

This booklet attempts to give a brief overview of the nature of organization development (OD). It describes the role of the professional organization development specialist, how he functions, and what he tries to do in the client system. It also describes the purposes of the Midwest Organization Development Network, a nonprofit association of OD professionals. Seven major assumptions about organizations are proposed, and a 12-step process for beginning OD programs in client systems is outlined. The booklet concludes with a review of the kinds of learning outcomes organizations may expect from OD programs. (Author)

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A PROCEDURE FOR STRENGTHENING ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

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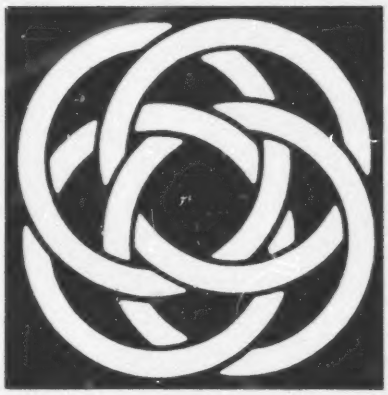

The major effort of the Midwest Organization Development Network is to disseminate information and promote understanding of organization development. A secondary thrust of the Network is to provide client systems with an up-to-date listing and description of available professional resources. These resources include trained consultants with a background in organizational structure, behavioral science, administrative theory, and related fields. This booklet, and the Membership Directory, available from the Network office, are examples of how these efforts are being made.

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A Nonprofit Association of Organization Development Professionals

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Institutional or corporate change often occurs as a result of crisis. Emergencies put some businesses into "organizational shock." Strikes, consumer revolts, trade negotiations, and sudden demands are examples of stress situations that need immediate action. Situations like these can create confusion. They nearly always require quick, if not impulsive, decision making. These situations are excellent stimuli for internal conflict and turmoil. They strain remaining ties of commitment between the employees and their jobs. They create distrust in organizational goals and more important, they can reduce the overall potency of the corporation.

In some organizations change is attempted with care and at leisure. But the same old problems emerge: long- and short-range plans do not materialize because of contravening beliefs about business; excellent programs become buried in committees because there are not enough staff members who really care; professional staff members exhaust much creative energy and skill in unproductive conflict and competition with each other. Distrust abounds, and informal cliques and power groups shatter possibilities for collaborative planning efforts and mutual productivity. People begin to believe that they cannot bring about change. Feelings of enslavement to outmoded practices grow. A sense of insecurity and futility among staff people brings the total change process to a halt.

Offices and business climates can however, be warmer and more friendly than this. All persons connected with the organization—workers, managers, executives—can work more productively together. Those persons who have invested their lives in the development and production of goods and services *can* establish an atmosphere of mutual trust and collaboration. An atmosphere can be established which will support more innovation and creativity, increase job satisfaction, develop more positive interpersonal relationships and foster greater participation in creating plans and defining organizational goals. The Midwest Organization Development Network can help systems establish this kind of atmosphere. Competent help is available through the resources of the Network. Systems which have been helped include business and industry; federal, state, and local governments; educational institutions; churches; and other not-for-profit organizations.

Organization Development Defined

The Midwest Organization Development Network defines organization development as a series of planned processes by which human resources are identified, utilized, and developed in ways that strengthen organizational effectiveness by increasing problem solving capabilities and planning.

How The Midwest Organization Development Network Can Help

Traditionally, organizations have depended upon internal development programs for bringing about professional growth. Experience has shown that when organizational changes are attempted without competent help, and by persons who are committed to the existing corporate value system, they tend to be minor and of short duration. The Midwest Organization Development Network believes that organizations need continuous and *systematic strategies* to bring about long-term growth through flexibility and change. These strategies can best be implemented through the working together of external consultants and internal resources.

The techniques, procedures, and skills for establishing such strategies exist. They have been developed in business and industry through carefully designed management programs and research, educational and business administration, and the behavioral sciences. Many large corporations recognize the continuous need for upgrading their own organizational effectiveness. They retain full-time specialist and consultant staffs. Few organizations can afford to support internal consultants with the breadth of experience available through the Midwest Organization Development Network.

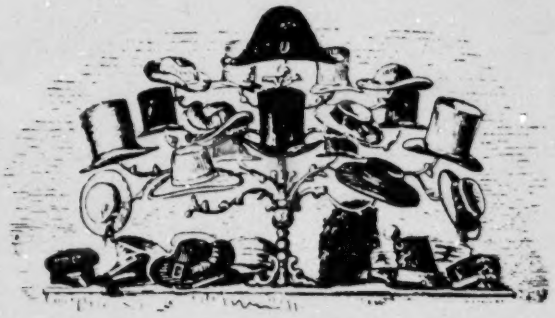
Executives are learning, with our help, new and more effective ways to handle such things as:

- staff utilization and assignments
- employee apathy
- community-organization relationships
- policy development
- interpersonal trust and collaboration
- team building
- conflict resolution
- decision making

The constructive use of conflict and the use of feedback for positive change is a major thrust of the strategy used.

What We Try To Do

The major effort of the Midwest Organization Development Network is to disseminate information and promote understanding of organization development. A secondary thrust of the Network is to provide client systems with an up-to-date listing and description of available professional resources. These resources include trained consultants with a background in organizational structure, behavioral science, administrative theory, and related fields. This booklet and the Membership Directory* are examples of how these efforts are being made.



*Midwest Organization Development Network Membership Directory 1974.

What The OD Professional Tries To Do

The primary objective of the OD professional is to help client systems establish continuing procedures for exploring and implementing organizational and personal growth. This means such things as revising ineffective procedures, modifying organizational structures, identifying and developing needed resources and support programs, establishing new roles and responsibilities, building needed staff skills, and selecting alternative evaluation programs for measuring both executive and worker effectiveness. The OD professional typically involves client system personnel in a series

of planned activities, or interventions. These interventions are designed to accomplish several objectives, including:

- strengthening the ability to diagnose leadership skills in order to coordinate and carry out programs of planned change.
- building strategies for promoting organizational and personal renewal while maintaining overall perspective
- improving the problem solving ability of people who have to work together by helping them as a group become more proficient at
    - identifying and localizing problems
    - diagnosing areas of concern

- planning action programs
- assessing competencies and needs
- sharing skills

- enhancing the concept of team productivity and task accomplishment by developing skills in many areas of personal and interpersonal collaboration, including:

  - listening
  - trusting
  - communicating
  - collaborating
  - using feedback
  - providing valid data
  - exercising freedom of choice
  - becoming aware of one's own behavior
  - experimenting with new patterns of interpersonal behavior

- improving information-gathering skills necessary for making decisions, diagnosing problems, and analyzing alternative results of actions
- identifying new responsibilities and roles necessary for building the organization
- clarifying the impact that differing value-systems have within the client organization

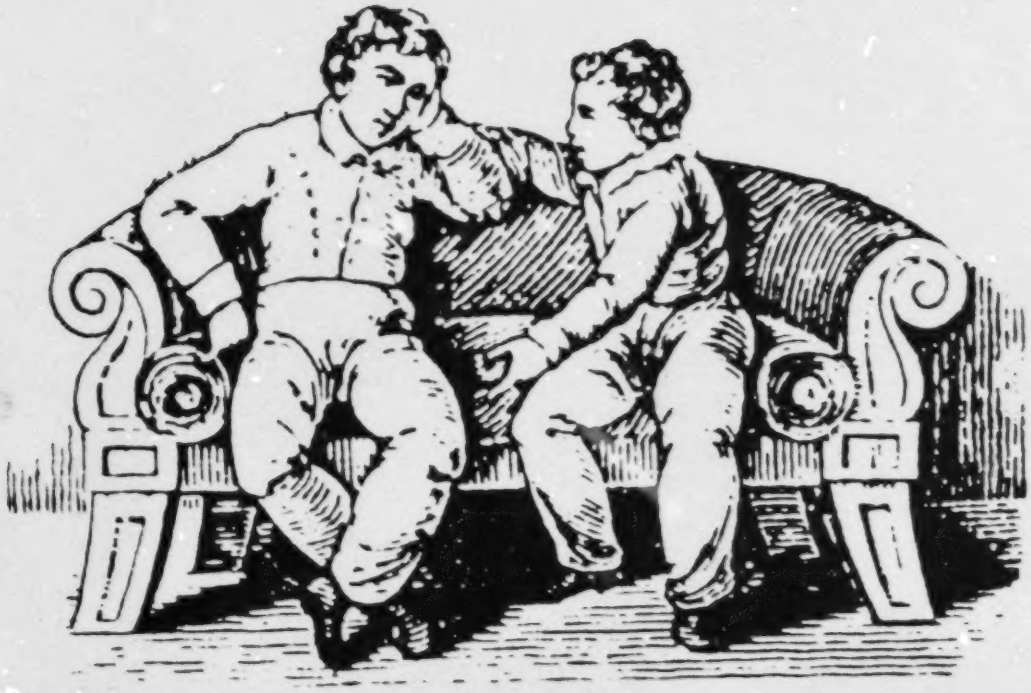
The Midwest Organization Development Network does not endorse any one kind of organizational structure or framework. It does support the concept that organization development is a learning process that leads to more effective systems. This learning process revolves around four considerations:

1. Consideration of the people who comprise the organization and how they function together.
2. Consideration for the organizational expectations and how people fulfill these.
3. Consideration for the management philosophy and its effect on how people do their jobs.
4. Consideration for the relationships between the organization and the larger environment in which it exists.

Every person in the organization can be made aware of the values he tends to emphasize. The OD professional will apply a variety of techniques and learning experiences to help people identify the ways in which they deal with issues concerning people, role expectation and fulfillment, management problems, and larger issues in the community. Program participants learn to test new patterns of behavior, share and delegate areas of responsibility, and feel "in closer touch" with genuine basic issues.

Some Assumptions About Organizations

1. Programs of planned corporate change require:
   a. the accumulation of valid data about the organization and its personnel



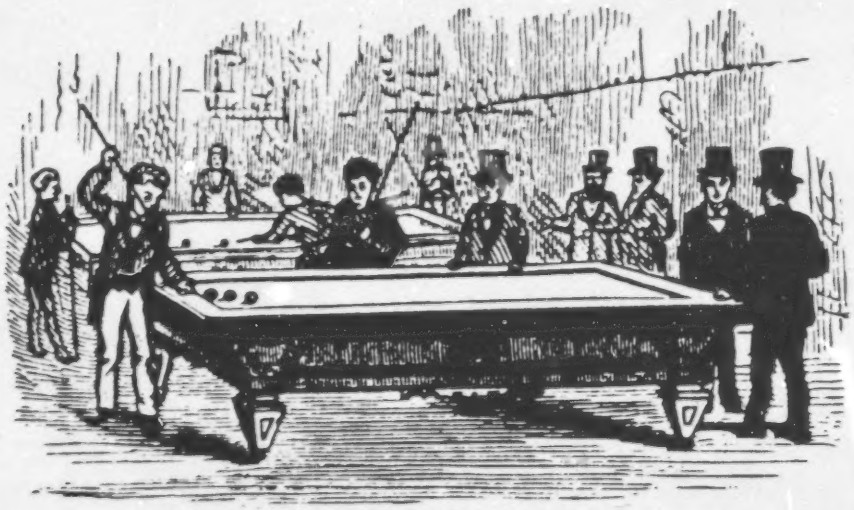
b. confidence that information will be used professionally and in the best interests of everyone

c. that feelings of personal and professional commitment to change underlie the use of data as a basis for planning.

2. People need an opportunity to learn that other forms of behavior may be more effective for them.
3. There is no single best way to manage or organize. Every organization has to find its unique way to be effective at any given time by drawing on theories and techniques of organization development.
4. Tension and organizational stress can be relieved when conflicting objectives and differing points of view among staff are honestly discussed. The OD professional can help focus energy used in dealing with problems of conflict in more useful directions.
5. Organizations will be more effective when attention is given to organizational problems instead of concentrating primarily on personalities.
6. Organizations can develop atmospheres which encourage a greater sense of employee responsibility to task accomplishment.
7. Extensive problem solving resources exist within every organization.

How To Begin

1. A decision is made to act.
2. An OD professional is hired to work full time in the organization or a contract is arranged with an outside OD consultant. Both alternatives would be ideal.
3. A group of influential people from within the system is selected to help plan and implement the OD process.
4. The OD professional, in collaboration with the planning group helps:



   a. Identify general problem areas
   b. Determine priorities for problem solving
   c. Locate areas of conflict and concern
   d. Establish a schedule for problem resolution
   e. Select alternative data gathering procedures

5. Data is collected and analyzed.
6. Data analysis is reported back to appropriate personnel.
7. Organizational goals and needs are assessed.
8. Action planning begins.
9. Job assignments and implementation plans are made.

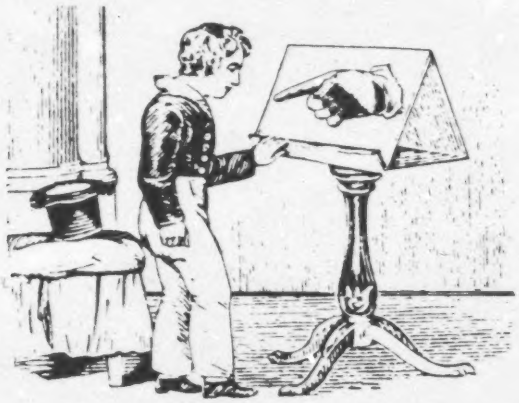
10. Evaluation of progress is made.
11. Decision is made to continue, revise, or stop OD process.
12. Cycle may be repeated.

Learning Outcomes

Throughout this process, the OD professional continually monitors and designs intervention strategies to help personnel learn to deal with such problems as:

- confrontation
- communication
- diagnosing
- decision making
- scapegoating
- use and misuse of power and authority
- building support

In the organization development context, the professional's role is considerably different from the traditional management consultant role. The OD professional will use specialized skills and techniques to help people identify their *own* problems, to facilitate the gathering of their *own* data, and to assist them in creating their *own* solutions. This



process helps a variety of groups strengthen their abilities to use continuously and efficiently the skills and resources already available in their *own* organization. His role is catalytic as well as analytic. He helps groups diagnose their own concerns and explore factors that may be blocking improvement and hindering productivity. He helps personnel develop more creative ways of solving their own problems.

The major goal of the OD professional is to strengthen total system effectiveness. To make this happen, efficient team operation is of primary concern. However, individual growth can and frequently does occur through the organization growth process.

Experience has shown that several kinds of growth result from the implementation of an effective organization development program. First is *professional growth* that comes about through a clearer understanding of one's own job, its responsibilities and its impact on others in the organization, and through an improved ability to accomplish

one's tasks. Second, *personal growth* results from an increased awareness of one's own behavior and how it affects others, and from renewed perspective of one's own attitudes and values. *Interpersonal growth* also occurs. It is usually exhibited in terms of stronger feelings of trust and collaboration, a greater security to take risks with others when testing out ideas, and a warmer and more considerate regard for people in general. Fourth, there is *team growth*. Organizations generally report that this is a beneficial outcome to them since it results in more effective cooperation, more realistic planning for short- and long-range goals, and a heightened sense of *esprit*, belongingness, and "ownership" in what the system is trying to do.

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